CHRISTIANITY
THE
FINAL RELIGION

BY

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

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CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL RELIGION

Addresses on the Missionary Message for the World today, showing that the Old Gospel is the Only Gospel

BY
SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

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PREFACE

Fanatics have been defined as those who redouble their energies when they have forgotten their aim. Doubtless all who are interested in the missionary enterprise are in these days putting forth new energy and advocating more rapid movement to attain their object. Have not some, however, forgotten the goal in their earnest effort to press forward? Is there not some danger lest we run so fast that we forget to carry the message? Will the broader outlook diminish deep insight?

A brilliant writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* (May, 1920) characterized the modern missionary as one whose "first concern is always something deeper, something more vital than questions of theological and metaphysical speculation relating to the Person and the Work of Christ, to the Virgin Birth (in which, together with other miracles he may or he may not believe); to the fine distinctions between the humanity, the divinity, the deity of Christ; to the nature of the Trinity; to the Atonement. Upon just one thing he insists: that which touches not the *bene esse* of the Christian faith, but its *esse*: the personal assimilation in the disciples' life of the teaching and of the *spirit* of Jesus."

On the contrary, we believe that the very nature of Christianity, its dynamic, its passion, its power of missionary appeal, its *esse* as well as its

bene esse consists in its *credo*—its belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who died on the Cross for our sins and arose again, who gave us this message as our only commission and sealed it with the promise of his presence.

The chapters that form this little book treat of this aspect of the missionary message. They were first given as addresses in conferences in our country and abroad; some appeared in *The Constructive Quarterly, The Biblical Review* or *The Sunday School Times.* They were then revised, and are now sent on their errand at the request of friends to set forth our conviction in the adequacy and sufficiency of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." That Gospel which Paul preached has been the message of all who were in his apostolic succession and is today, as in his day, "the power of God unto Salvation to every one who believeth." Why should we be ashamed of its contents or its implications? In an age of doubt it is the only anchor of our hope; in the present chaos of international relations it alone can bring reconciliation.

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Cairo, Egypt.

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I

"Travelling on through Amphipolis and Apollonia they reached Thessalonica. Here there was a Jewish synagogue, and Paul, as usual, went in; for three sabbaths he urged with them on the scriptures, explaining and quoting passages to prove that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, and that 'the Jesus I proclaim to you is the Messiah.' Some were persuaded and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas, including a host of devout Greeks and a large number of the leading women."—Acts 17: 1-4 (Moffat's Translation).

CHAPTER I

Earliest Christianity

IF all the New Testament books were lost except one, and that were the earliest epistle written by the Apostle Paul, we would still have convincing proof of the historicity of Christianity and clear evidence for nearly every article of the Apostles' Creed as expressing the faith of primitive Christians. The earliest and therefore oldest book of the New Testament is the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. This is the general consensus of opinion among all critics. "In the case of the first epistle," says Dr. Milligan in the *Standard Bible Dictionary,* "its authenticity which no one even thought of challenging before the nineteenth century is now so generally recognized by critics of all schools, except those who reject the Pauline writings altogether, that it is not necessary to discuss it further here."

The exact date assigned to the epistle depends on the chronology of Paul's life, but all critics are agreed that it was not written later than the year 53 A. D. (some say as early as 49 A. D.), that is, less than twenty years or twenty-two years after the Crucifixion. All critical opinion, therefore, brings us as close as possible to the primitive days of Christianity when those who were eyewitnesses of what Jesus was and did and suffered were still

living. The epistle itself, as Weiss remarks, shows (Chapter 5: 25) that Paul began his epistolary intercourse with the churches which he founded "by this letter and had therefore to give directions as to what use should be made of it." The same authority points out that Chapter 2: 16 has no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, as Baur inferred and then made false deductions as to the date of the epistle.

The contents of the epistle, moreover, everywhere point to this early date, especially because of its omissions. "Nowhere," says Dr. Milligan, "does the real Paul stand out more clearly before us, alike in the intensity of his affection for his converts, in the confident assertion of the purity of his own motives, and in the fierceness of his indignation against those who are hindering the progress of Christ's work." Of all of the Pauline epistles this one represents perhaps most fully the apostle's normal and familiar style of writing. Renan describes it as "stenographed conversation." We may be sure that whatever we find in this epistle, if it were the only document left us, would be sincere and genuine in its character. It is a love-letter written to meet pressing needs, and with perhaps no thought of any wider audience than those to whom it was addressed. It was written and sent from Corinth to Thessalonica, then, as now, one of the largest and most important cities of the Levant. The things that took place in this city were not done in a corner. The apostle wrote to Jews and Gentiles who were

contemporaries of Christ. Some of them may have been present at Jerusalem at Pentecost. The witness of this epistle is therefore as strong as possible, because it portrays undesignedly the character of early Christianity and the faith of early Christians.

When we consider the character of the writer as revealed between the lines, and the character of those to whom he wrote, a typical group of believers, who can doubt that what is here taught contains the very fundamentals of our faith? If we deny these teachings, we cannot honestly call ourselves Christians. The issue of our investigation is therefore to ascertain whether this earliest New Testament document contains teaching which many now are prepared to deny because they believe it was all of later growth and development. If, for example, the deification of Christ was due to St. John's Gospel and to St. Paul's later teaching, and the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels is human only, how do we account for the fact that such an epistle as the one before us, after emphasizing the unity of God, gives such strong proof for the deity of Christ and is addressed without any apology for such teaching to a group of Jewish and Gentile believers?

Regarding the writer, we learn from the epistle itself that he had the authority of an apostle (2: 6) ; that he was associated with Silvanus and Timothy (1: 1; 3: 2) ; that he was entrusted with a message called the Gospel (1: 5; 2: 4), which he boldly proclaimed (2: 2). The writer had traveled

widely. He had visited Athens (3: 1), Thessalonica, Macedonia (4: 10), and Achaia (1: 1; 7:8). He had been cruelly treated at Philippi (2: 1); and, similarly treated, had been driven out from Judea by the Jews (2: 15). The man who wrote this epistle was a man of prayer (1: 2). His only hope was in the Lord Jesus Christ (1: 3). He tried to please God and not man (2: 4). He hated flattery and hypocrisy (2: 5). He was so careful of his conduct that others imitated him as they did "the Lord" (1: 6). He loved passionately those to whom he wrote, longing to see them as a father doth his children, as a nurse cherisheth her babe. He was willing to pour out his own soul for them (2: 7, 8, 11, 17; 3: 8, 10). He sought no favor from the hands of those to whom he wrote, because he supported himself, working not only by day but by night (2: 9). He had his own fight for character, his ideals were those of a soldier (5: 8), and he knew his enemy (2: 18).

The letter was written on the spur of the moment, just after Timothy had arrived from Thessalonica with glad news (3: 6). Whatever he tells them in this epistle is based on his own experience, his faith in God, in Jesus Christ, and his hope of salvation. This is perfectly evident from the unconscious change of the pronouns "ye" and "we," especially in 4: 13, 14, 17. No man could write in this fashion with the intent to deceive or to idealize, and we repeat once more before we analyze the teaching of the epistle that Paul, once a Jew but now a Christian, who has suffered for

being such, writes all this *less than twenty years after the death of Jesus, the Nazarene, on the cross.*

The teaching of the epistle touches nearly every Christian doctrine. For the sake of convenience we have grouped the facts as follows:

1. He who wrote and those to whom he wrote believed in the immortality of the soul (5:23). They believed in one God, the Creator, who is called "Father" (1:1; 3:11), who is the living true and only God (1:9; 3:9). This Father sent his Son from heaven (1:10) and revealed his will through Him who is called Jesus Christ (5:18). He is called the "God of Peace" (5:23), who searches hearts (2:4), desires holiness in men (4:3), and sanctifies believers (5:23).

This God made known his will by prophets (2:15) and makes it known now (that is, at the time when the apostle was writing) through his Gospel, which is a divine message (2:8) and not merely the word of man (2:13). There is no pantheism or polytheistic teaching in this epistle. Its doctrine of God is complete and fits in with the teaching of the Old Testament. We have clear reference also to the call of God to salvation and to holiness (2:12; 4:7; 5:24). The afflictions of believers are also predetermined by God (3:3).

2. What does this earliest document teach in regard to Jesus Christ? He is an historic personality, so well known that He needs no further introduction to its readers. He is the standard of conduct and character (1:6) and had a company of

apostles of whom Paul was one. After his perfect life He was killed by the Jews (2: 15), who are suffering God's wrath in consequence (2: 16). But this same Jesus afterward arose from the dead (1: 10; 5: 10; 4: 14). The writer comes back to this great truth even in so short an epistle repeatedly. Jesus is now in heaven (1: 10), but speaks through apostles (4: 15). They take solemn oaths in his name (5: 27) to claim authority for his message. It almost seems a claim of inspiration (compare 4: 15). Jesus who ascended into heaven is coming again (2: 19; 4: 15; 5: 23). His coming will be unexpected (5: 3), with his saints (3: 13), in glory (4: 16), in the clouds of the air (4: 17), but the time of his coming again remains uncertain. It will be as that of a thief in the night or of travail upon a woman with child (5: 2, 3). If this phraseology is original with the Apostle Paul, it bears a striking resemblance to that of Matthew (24: 43), and of Luke (12: 39). If it is quoted, have we not an argument here for the early date of the Gospel? At least of an original document that contained these phrases?

What is the character of Jesus Christ in this epistle? Can He be classified with prophets and apostles? Is He lower than the angels, or is it clear from this epistle that He is very God? His name is coupled with that of Deity, not once but frequently (1: 1; 3: 11; 4: 14). He is called "Lord" (1: 6). "God's Son" (1: 10), "the Lord Jesus" (4: 1), "Christ Jesus" (5: 17), "Jesus" (1: 10), and "the Lord Jesus Christ" (1: 1; 1: 3;

5: 28). It is not necessary to go into the significance of these names. All of them would be full of meaning, especially to Jewish Christians, yet none the less to Gentile converts.

The One who bears these high titles has the attributes of Deity. He directs by his providence (3: 11), avenges iniquity (4: 6), has authority on the day of judgment, for it is called *"his* day," He comes from heaven with *his* angels and the "trump of God." He is also the Lord of salvation because He delivers from the wrath to come (1: 10), is the source of salvation (5: 9), establishes hearts and produces holiness (3: 13).

Although He lived a life on earth, which terminated in death, his present vital power is so universal that He is the fountain and source of love (3: 12), not only among believers but toward all humanity. Believers stand fast in Him (13: 8). This is their life. His grace is the highest good (5: 28), and somehow this Lord Jesus Christ is in constant vital union with those who believe in Him, not only now (4: 1), but even after death (5: 10; 4: 14; 4: 16).

Is it possible to suppose that such a conception of Jesus was the invention of such a man, and could this historic personage have been transformed within two decades from the human into the Divine? The witness of this epistle is the witness of the aboriginal faith of Christians in the deity of the Christ.

3. The epistle also teaches much regarding the Holy Spirit. He is a person (1: 5, 6), the

source of joy in believers (1: 6), and given of God to them (4: 8). His symbol is that of fire, for He can be quenched (5: 18). In this case also we have indication that the language used by John the Baptist and by Christ himself was familiar to the apostle.

In view of this teaching in regard to God's Son and the Holy Spirit, it does not surprise us to find three references to the doctrine of the Trinity (1: 3-5; 5: 18, 18, and 5: 23).

4. We turn now to the teaching of this epistle regarding the church. Here we have a beautiful picture of apostolic Christianity. It is called "the church of Christ Jesus" (2: 14). It consists of a company of brethren (1: 14; 5: 26). It is founded on the teaching of the Gospel (1: 5; 2: 2). Its doors are open to Gentile and Jew (2: 16). Its watchword is: "Love for all humanity" (4: 10).

The church seems to be well organized (1: 1; 2: 14; 32: 6; 5: 12, 13). It therefore exercises discipline (5: 14). Among its members there are a number once idolaters but who now worship the one true God (1: 9). Their theory of comparative religion is that when they were idolaters they were "in the night and the darkness," but now they are "the children of light and of the day," believers built up by the Word (2: 13).

There is no reference to the sacraments, but this does not necessarily prove that they were not in use.

What marvelous transformations of character must have taken place among this company of be-

lievers! We know from other writers what was the moral condition of the Roman empire, and especially of its great seaports. Thessalonica was no exception. Only the life of Jesus can account for such ideals of character and standards of moral judgment as we find in this short epistle. Grace, peace, and love are considered the highest virtues (1:1; 1:3; 3:6; 4:9). Here were people who proved faithful to high ideals under affliction and persecution (1:6; 2:2; 2:14; 3:4; 3:7). How these Christians loved one another (2:10, 12)! It was a missionary church (1:7, 8), full of the joy of serving (1:6), toiling and laboring for some high ideal (1:3), with constant prayer to God for his assistance and blessing (1:2; 5:17; 5:25). Here was a little company of men and women opposed to hypocrisy (2:4, 5), uncleanness, error, and guile (2:3), alive to the duty of self-support (4:11, 12), engaged in the fight for character against Satan (3:5), and so successful that the Apostle glories in them, rejoices in their spiritual welfare, and longs to see them (2:17, 19; 3:8, 12). And all this twenty years after the crucifixion!

Their ideals of married life, its purpose and purity, were high (4:4, 5). They had learned the lesson of forgiveness (5:15) and of universal love and benevolence. Their lives were full of prayer and gratitude at all times and for all things (5:17, 18), they were earnestly attempting to abstain from every form of evil (5:20), and they believed that God was able to preserve their spirit, soul,

and body blameless (5:23). It is no wonder that their greeting therefore was with an holy kiss (5:26).

Finally, we may ask, what was their hope which kept them steadfast in such a place and at such a time, a flock of sheep in the midst of wolves? They looked for Christ's return. He was their hope, their joy, their comfort (4:16; 4:18; 4:13). After the temptations of Satan (2:18; 3:5) had been endured and overcome they looked forward to death as a sleep (4:13). Not only a sleep, but a sleep which was in Jesus, on his loving bosom. After death comes the resurrection, at Christ's glorious appearing with the rapture of the saints to meet Him in the air. And they comforted one another with these words: "We shall be forever with the Lord" (4:17).

Such is the picture of early Christianity. What further need have we of testimony or apologetic? If all the documents of the New Testament were lost except this earliest epistle, we would still have the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

"Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death."

II

"Anyone who is 'advanced' and will not remain by the doctrine of Christ, does not possess God: he who remains by the doctrine of Christ possesses both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not admit him to the house—do not even greet him, for he who greets him shares in his wicked work."—2 John: 9-11 (Moffatt's Translation).

CHAPTER II

Thinking Gray in Missions

IN his book, *Thinking Black,* Dan Crawford has introduced us to the psychology of the black man so as to give us a new angle of vision. The primitive mind seems, naturally, to think in black and white rather than in gray. Perhaps our modern civilization has made us lose the power of sharp distinctions in the world of thought. We were told that one of the results of the war would be to teach men everywhere to think less superficially and more conclusively on moral questions. Is this true?

There is always a tendency to compromise in morals, and the same tendency is evident in regard to the work of evangelization. God divided the light from the darkness, not only in the world of nature, but in the world of thought. "This, then, is the message," says John, "which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." The attitude of the apostles toward the non-Christian religions is not expressed in gray or twilight shades. There are no blurred edges to their convictions. "Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and shine" in their teachings.

What Paul thinks of idolatry is clear, not only from the first chapter of Romans, but from such words as those in his epistle to the Corinthians: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I would not that ye should have communion with demons."

John was the apostle of love, and yet it was he who wrote in regard to the Gospel message: "If anyone cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting, for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works." Such intolerance is impossible to those who think in terms of gray—without intolerance of any sort.

James does not hesitate to class the devils with those who trust in Unitarianism (2: 19). And Jude speaks of the false teachers of his day as "autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots * * * * wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever."

What we need today in missions is less comparative religion and more positive religion. It is possible to dwell upon the tolerable things in Hinduism, the ideal things of Buddhism and the noble things in Islam even as one sifts out grains of gold from tons of earth, to the practical exclusion of the social evils, the spiritual darkness and the spiritual death which dominate these systems. This was not the method of the apostles. A recent writer in the *Indian Witness* puts the fact in very forcible language: "The wise general does

not carefully search out the strong spots in the fortress of his antagonist and then spend his time illuminating them with his searchlights. He finds the weak spots and dwells on them with his heavy artillery. Let some of our sages who are scholastic rather than practical prepare a list of the things vitally antagonistic to Christian truth, then the men who are practical rather than scholastic will be able to avoid scattering an ineffective effort and to concentrate on those things the destruction of which by their fall will cause the fall of false faiths."

To us who work among Moslems, their denial of Jesus Christ's mission, His incarnation, His atonement, His deity are the very issues of the conflict. Almost spontaneously, therefore, what might have been mere theological dogma in the mind of the missionary turns into a deep spiritual conviction, a logical necessity and a great passion. Face to face with those who deny our Saviour and practically deify Mohammed, one is compelled to think in black and white. The challenge of the *Muezzin,* who calls to Moslem prayer, is a cry of pain; it hurts. In the silence of the night one cannot help thinking how it pleased the Father that in Jesus Christ all fulness should dwell, not in Mohammed. Face to face with Islam one cannot help asking what will be the final outcome of Christian Unitarianism. In the history of Islam its so-called monotheism has always degenerated into some form of pantheism or deism.

When Moslems assert the Gospel is corrupted

and untrustworthy, the missionary can find no help in textbooks of destructive criticism. One wonders whether the great conflict between Islam and Christianity will not have to be fought out between the covers of the Bible. They themselves are abandoning their Traditions and the Koran in public and private discussion and are appealing to the Christian Scriptures. Their appeal is often based on the interpretation of those who think in gray. A recent paragraph on the subject of Christ's Deity that appeared in an Indian Moslem magazine copied all its arguments from books by modern Unitarians.

An Arabic book published at Beirut a few years ago is entitled *Heathen Doctrines in the Christian Religion.* It is by a Moslem graduate from a mission college who fancies that he has proved Christianity false by appealing to European critics of the destructive school. In Cairo the Moslem press quotes Unitarian interpretation of New Testament doctrine as proof against the New Testament Christ. The Christian who has no convictions in regard to the great fundamentals of Christianity is easily led to treat Islam as a sister religion and *all* Moslems as seekers after God in their own way.

Now, if there is no real distinction between regeneration and evolution, if there was no miracle at Bethlehem and only a martyrdom on Calvary, we may patiently await the future development of Islam on the right lines. But in that case the missionary is no longer a proclaimer of the truth;

he is only a seeker after truth. He is no longer an architect and builder, but a geologist looking for fossil specimens in old strata to complete his collection of things once alive, but now dead. He has interest in religion, but not passion for Christ.

"The great obstacle," writes an experienced missionary from India, "in the way of the success of the Gospel in non-Christian lands is not the attitude of the people or the inherent difficulties of the work, but the tendency on the part of missionaries to be judges instead of advocates, with a desire to hold the balance of truth rather than wield its sword."

The painful attitude of neutral states in the World War should prove to the Christian that for him there can be no neutrality in a war for a Kingdom which has no frontiers.

The effect of thinking in gray is inevitable on the messenger as well as on his message. Twilight life is not conducive to spiritual health. We need the full blaze of the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. His authority must be supreme in the intellectual sphere. His belief in the Old Testament scriptures and his statement that "they cannot be broken" leaves only one alternative; if we reject them, we reject Him also. It is not hard to accept the miracles of the Old and New Testament if we accept the miracle in the first chapter of Genesis and the greater miracle in the first chapter of John's Gospel. As R. L. Knox says in his brilliant book *Some Loose Stones*:

"Orthodox theology explains all the miracles recorded of our Saviour under one single hypothesis that He was omnipotent God. But the enemy of miracle is forced to give a variety of different explanations; that the healing of the sick was faith-healing, the stilling of the storm, coincidence, the feeding of the five thousand a misrepresented sacrament, the withering of the fig tree a misrepresented parable, the raising of Lazarus a case of premature burial, and so on."

A mutilated Gospel can only mean a mutilated spiritual life. When we walk in the light we do not mix colors. Christ's touch cures color-blindness. There is a noble intolerance in the very words used so often by the Apostle John: light—darkness, truth—lie, life—death, God—devil. The effect of thinking in gray always leads to compromise, and where there is compromise there is indecision. Men have opinions instead of convictions; they join Erasmus in his study rather than Luther nailing his theses to the door of the cathedral. But Luther would have made a better foreign missionary than Erasmus, especially in these days when so many in the Christian and non-Christian world are thinking in gray.

III

"The God who made the world and all things in it, he, as Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in shrines that are made by human hands; he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything, for it is he who gives life and breath and all things to all men. All nations he has created from a common origin, to dwell all over the earth, fixing their allotted periods and the boundaries of their abodes, meaning them to seek for God on the chance of finding him in their groping for him. Though indeed he is close to each one of us, for it is in him that we live and move and exist—as some of your own poets have said."—Acts 17: 24.-28 (Moffatt's Translation).

CHAPTER III

The Solidarity of the Race

THE world was never so small as it is today, yet never was it so large. Discovery has increased our knowledge of its vast areas, while invention has decreased its circumference and diameter. The sources of the Nile are known; central Asia has been explored; we have maps of the heart of Africa, and the north and south poles have been discovered; desert and jungle and ice floe have yielded up their last secret to the intrepid pioneer. Joseph Cook's statement in one of his Boston lectures, that "the nineteenth century has made the whole world one neighborhood, the twentieth century will make it one brotherhood," is being fulfilled.

An earthquake in Tokio is recorded on the seismograph at Washington; famine in India changes the price of wheat on the exchange at Chicago; the annual flood of the Nile is watched with keen interest by the cotton brokers of Manchester; the assassination of the crown prince of Serbia brought a panic to the pearl markets of Arabia; the Red Cross drive for Armenian relief found response in the heart of humanity everywhere; from Patagonia to Alaska, and from Shanghai to Chicago gifts were sent for distribution to the victims of Turkish atrocities. It has become literally true that no man liveth to him-

self. The war has made us realize as never before the unity of the world and the solidarity of the race.

There is in our day a special appropriateness in the message which Paul delivered on Mars Hill, consecrated to the god of war, and face to face with the Christless civilization of Greece and Rome:

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him though he be not far from every one of us."

1. Paul's great declaration of our unity by creation and in redemption was based on his faith in the Old Testament Scriptures. All other voices, however loudly they proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, are only echoes of the testimony which the Jew finds in Genesis and the Psalms, in Isaiah and the Prophets.

Nowhere do we find among all the sacred books of the East such clear testimony to the unity of the race and the possibility of a League of Nations and the brotherhood of man as in the Old Testament. Who can read the sixty-seventh Psalm without breathing the atmosphere of a cosmopolitan spirit? What a vision Isaiah had of the future destiny of the race, and of the time that was to be when God's glory should cover the earth and all nations should see the brightness of his rising!

The story of Adam may be a mystery, but it is not a myth to the writers of the New Testament.

The solidarity of the race in its common origin is confirmed by its solidarity in our common redemption. It is with deep philosophic insight that the Apostle Paul builds his theology upon this foundation: "As in Adam—so in Christ." While the Apostle John puts the capstone to the Bible teaching on this subject in the Revelation vision of ransomed humanity united again of every tribe, and kindred, and tongue, and people. The Lord Jesus Christ, in his teaching, always took for granted this solidarity of the race. He came as the Light of the world, and commissioned his apostles to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations; He anticipated no barriers which would prove unsurmountable to those who loved Him. When the Jews accused Him of being a Samaritan and having a devil, He passed by in scorn the first insinuation. In Him there was no race pride or race prejudice. He said to his disciples "Call no man your master; ye are all brethren."

After many vague and bizarre theories modern science has come back to a belief in the solidarity of the race and its unity. The microscope can distinguish the blood of brutes from that of humans, but not the blood of the Hottentot from that of the Hindu or of the Chinese. The old division by pigment of the skin, the shape of the skull, the texture of the hair and the facial angle has disappeared. Physiology, anthropology and psy-

chology alike testify to the essential unity of the human race.

This unity is far deeper than that of external resemblances or intellectual capacity; it is a moral unity. All men everywhere have been conscious of sin with its suffering and unrest. The human conscience, although largely influenced by heredity and environment, yet shows a marvelous likeness in its response to the fundamental principles of moral law. The thirst after God and fellowship with him, the sense of the eternal, the belief in the immortality of the soul—what are these but so many evidences of the solidarity of the race? The human family have shown everywhere the same capacity and possibilities of achievement under similar conditions and privileges. Japan has become a leader in science, India in philosophy, China in industrial development, while Armenia leads the world in the spirit of sacrifice.

The World War has shown, as nothing else could, the essential unity of the race and the ties that bind our common humanity. The East and the West met in no man's land. Europe, Asia and Africa sat together with America around the peace table to determine the destinies of humanity and to "make the whole world safe for democracy." In the trenches of France and Flanders representatives from every part of the British empire, from the French colonies of Africa, from China and India were thrown together in the closest fellowship.

They were organized under one leadership, with one ideal, and one hope, facing a common peril and finishing a common task. The East and the West mingled as never before and learned to understand each other. The negro troops from the southern states and those from Algeria fought together against a common foe. According to the daily press the negroes of the United States have in this way surprised the world. It is said that when the colored troops left Birmingham, Alabama, they placed placards on the day coaches with this inscription: "This color will not run!" Every negro regiment made a record that places it high in the military values of Americanism. One white commander of a negro regiment was ordered by a superior officer to take his troops out of a dangerous position at the front, and the prompt answer was: "My men never retreat!" They went on and the wrath of the superior officer was consumed in cheers. The Eighth Illinois came back with twenty-two men among them wearing the American D. S. C., while sixty-eight wore the croix de guerre. Army officers who met their ship said there were more decorations visible among the Eighth, or Three Hundred and Seventieth infantry (as it is now designated), than in any other regiment which had so far returned to the United States.

The Indian soldiers proved their valor on every front. Bengalis, Pathans, Ghurkas won the Victoria Cross for gallantry, and never again will Kipling speak of these men as "lesser breeds without the law."

Not only on the battlefield, but in the relief of suffering, in Red Cross drives and in Y. M. C. A. activities the unity of the world has been marvelously evident. The spirit of sacrifice and of service took hold of distant races and diverse nationalities, drawing them as comrades into a new experience of unselfish devotion.

2. This solidarity of the race, however, which must be admitted in theory, which is revealed in Scripture, and which has been illustrated during the war, is denied in fact and made of none effect through race hatred and prejudice. How many a Peter still needs the vision of the sheet let down from heaven before he admits that nothing human is common or unclean.

Even within the church we have not emphasized the great truth that God is not a respecter of persons. The history of western civilization has many a dark page of international wrongs due to the trampling of the stronger upon the rights of the weaker race. Several years before the war one of our own poets wrote in Harper's Weekly this poem stinging with a sarcasm based on truth:

"We are the chosen people—look at the hue of our skins!
Others are black and yellow—that is because of their sins.
We are the heirs of the ages, masters of every race,
Proving our right and title by the bullet's saving grace,
Slaying the naked red men; making the black one our slave,
Flaunting our color in triumph over a world-wide grave.
Indian, Maori and Zulu; red men, yellow and black—
White are their bones wherever they met with the white-wolf's pack.
We are the chosen people—whatever we do is right,
Feared as men fear the leper, whose skin, like our own, is white!"

No one who has read the history of the Opium war, the dealings of the Dutch in South Africa with the Hottentots, the *Century of Dishonor,* described by Helen Hunt Jackson, in our dealings with the American Indians, the atrocities perpetrated on the Congo, or the story of the drink traffic in Africa and the South Seas, can fail to justify the sarcasm of the poet. The record is one of which we should be ashamed. If God has made of one blood all nations, we may well hope that He is through Christ the propitiation not only for our national sins, but for the national sins of the whole world.

Speaking of the dangers of mere nationalism, the Hindu poet Rabindranath Tagore says: "This nationalism is a cruel epidemic of evil that is sweeping over the human world of the present age and eating into its moral vitality. * * * * You must keep in mind that this political creed of *national* patriotism has not been given a very long trial. The lamp of ancient Greece is extinct in the land where it was first lighted, the power of Rome lies dead and buried under the ruins of its vast empire. But the civilization, whose basis is society and the spiritual ideal of man, is still a living thing in China and in India." The same sentiment is expressed by the German writer Nicolai in his remarkable, thought-stirring book, *The Biology of War.*

A dignitary of the church of England, Bishop Gore, recently said: "In the sight of God, in the judgment of Christ, no nation has any preroga-

tive right; we believe He cares equally for every race of every color or capacity, and that he lays it upon each nation alike to make the most of itself and its resources in order that it may better minister to the needs of all mankind, and maintain the universal and impartial interests of justice and freedom and peace."

We must, therefore, Christianize our international relations, and through the work of Christian missions restore the lost spiritual unity of the race in Jesus Christ our Lord. Only Christ can do it, and only in his spirit of compassion and sacrificial love can we help Him to accomplish the impossible. There must be an armistice of passion and hatred as well as an armistice of war. Our missionary work should never be that of condescension, but of communion. The heathen are not "lesser breeds without the law," but prodigal children painfully seeking their way back to the Father's house and the Father's heart. The races less favored are not the white man's burden—still less his beasts of burden—but the white man's responsibility and opportunity. As the little girl said to the policeman who remonstrated when she was carrying a child larger than herself through the crowded traffic: *"No, he is not heavy; he is my brother."* The hymns of hate have had their day. Let us tune our voices and our hearts to the hymn of love. The *London Times* of December 26, 1917, published a woman's reply to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who at that time preached vengeance

on Germany. It is a great message which Ethel M. Arnold wrote for our days of reconstruction:

"O men of the future! Is it hate that your spirits crave
To build the new world with vision, to build and to save?
Is it hate that we women need as trustees of the race?
Is it hate that we want to see stamped on the English face?
What but hate, fruit of envy, loathiest weed that grows,
Has made of the men who fight us bandits, not decent foes?
Men maddened and drugged with hate, a poisoned dehumanized breed,
Because they have drunk of the brew, the hellish brew of the weed!
For the victor's right to avenge, for strength to see justice done,
For faith to disperse the darkness now veiling the face of the sun,
For power to uproot the weed, the noisome growth of the pit—
For these things, not hate, they died, 'the men who have done their bit.'"

If there is anything that the great war unmistakably has taught us, it is the fundamental truth of human brotherhood in Jesus Christ. He has broken down all middle walls of partition.

The Peace Table that really counts is the one at which He is always standing as He did on the night on which He was betrayed. It is the same Peace Table where He appeared suddenly when the doors were shut for fear of Jews, and said to the little band of disciples, "My peace I give unto you." Then He showed them his hands and his side. It is when we see Him in his resurrection glory with the evidences of our common humanity —the mark of our spear and of our nails, that we

will forgive each other by remembering Him. A British writer in *The Round Table,* discussing the redemption of Germany, tells the legend of the soul of Judas Iscariot: "It fled from the suicide's corpse through the void, and passed from abyss to abyss, till at last remorse yielded to grief. And behold a great light: and the desolate ghost from the outer darkness looked in (for the windows of heaven were open), and saw the apostles, his brethren, standing about a table laid with bread and wine, the body and blood of their Lord. Then came One, who took him by the hand, and drew him inside. 'We have waited for thee,' said the Master whom Judas Iscariot betrayed. 'My guests could not sit down to my supper till thou wast here.' So, after many days, will the soul of Germany, purged and renewed, come back to the fellowship of civilized nations. We may taste the communion of freedom meanwhile. But we cannot sit down to the feast till Germany is there."

Has a new day dawned, a new era with its League of Nations and love for democracy? Is it a day of reconstruction, not only economic and social and national, but of moral and spiritual reconstruction? Are we ready for the task?

"O see that ye build securely
When the time of building comes,
With square-hewn blocks of righteousness
And cornerstones of faithfulness
And girders strong of righted wrong
And the blood of our martyrdoms.
And build on the One Foundation
That shall make the building sure
The Rock that was laid ere the world was made,
Build on Him, and ye build secure."

IV

"Hold your ground, tighten the belt of truth about your loins, wear integrity as your coat of mail, and have your feet shod with the stability of the gospel of peace; above all, take faith as your shield, to enable you to quench all the fire-tipped darts flung by the evil one, put on salvation as your helmet, and take the Spirit as your sword (that is, the word of God)."—Eph. 6: 14-17 (Moffatt's Translation).

CHAPTER IV

The Impact of Christianity on Non-Christian Religions

THE impact of Christianity on the non-Christian religions began nineteen centuries ago, and will not cease until the kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ. This impact has gathered momentum and strength throughout the centuries. Never before was it so world-wide and so strongly evident.

The definition of mechanical impact is full of significance and pregnant with illustration in considering the spiritual impact of a religion of Life, which is supernatural, on the other religions of the world. "Impact," we are told, "is the collision or shock occasioned by the meeting of two bodies, one or both being in motion." Now, it is perfectly evident that such impact is impossible unless there are two bodies. At least one of them must be in motion, and the effect of the impact will depend on the weight of the bodies, their momentum and their resisting power. The effect of the impact of two bodies may be only a rebound, as in the case of a rubber ball against a stone wall. It may result in penetration, as when a cannon-ball strikes a fort, or it may result in the complete disintegration of one of the two bodies, as

when a live shell strikes a fortification. These laws of the natural world find their application in the spiritual, and the impact of bodies terrestrial is a parable of the spiritual and moral effects resulting from the impact of a living Christianity on the other religions of earth.

Christianity and the non-Christian religions are two distinct conceptions. Their real relation, therefore, when they come into contact is that of impact, and not of compromise. Christianity is distinct in its origin. Its revelation is supernatural, and its Founder was the Lord from heaven. In a real sense the Church of Christ can say with the Psalmist: "He hath not dealt so with any other nation, and as for his statutes, they have not known them." Christianity is distinct in its character from all other religions. If it were not, there could be no universal mission. It is distinct in its effect. If it were not, there should be no foreign missions. "There may be comparative religions," as Dr. Parker has said, "but Christianity is not one of them." The non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet the intellectual, social, moral and spiritual needs of the human race. Only the Bread of Life can meet the famine of human hearts. Only the torch of the Gospel can lighten spiritual darkness; and the human heart finds no rest until it rests in Christ. The missionary character of Christianity, therefore, demands impact with every non-Christian system. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel." The glory of God is manifested in the strength

and momentum of this impact. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil."

When it was proposed in Berlin to found a chair of comparative religions, Harnack, the theologian and church historian, gave three reasons why such a chair has no place in a great university. The first reason he gave in these words: "There is only one religion which was revealed from God. All the other so-called religions are the inventions of men. One has come down from heaven; the others are of the earth, earthy. One is a divine revelation from the Creator of the universe; and all the others may be classified as mere moral philosophies." Now, whether or no we join with Harnack and Theodore Parker in stating our belief, we cannot believe in Christian missions unless we believe that the Christian religion and non-Christian religions are two distinct conceptions, which cannot avoid impinging the one upon the other. Christianity is distinct from the non-Christian philosophies and the non-Christian religions in its origin. It is distinct in its character. It is entirely distinct in its effect. So much is there in Buddhism that resembles Christianity, that the early Jesuits thought it the devil's imitation of Christianity. But in spite of all the world-movements toward civilization, in spite of the changes, in spite of the fact that "the morning light is breaking and the darkness disappears" through Africa and Asia, these non-Christian religions in their nature and character and effect

are wholly what they have always been—distinct from the Christian religion. What is Buddhism, for example, in this twentieth century. Hear the testimony of Lord Curzon, whom nobody would accuse of being prejudiced in favor of the Christian religion over against the non-Christian religions. In his book on the *Problems of the Far East,* he says of the Buddhist priests: "Their piety is an illusion; their pretensions a fraud; they are the outcasts of society; the expression on their faces is one of idiotic absorption. This is not surprising, for the mass-book is a dead letter to them; it is written in a strange language which they can no more decipher than fly. The words they chant are merely equivalents in sound, and as used in Chinese are totally devoid of sense." And a missionary goes on to say of this Buddhistic religion which holds in its grasp nearly three hundred million people: "The Buddhist priests have a blank idiotic look on their face; they are no more influenced by moral sense than are the waves of the sea; they know no sense of sin, and feel no need of a Saviour themselves. How, then, could they be a guide to others who are in need of a Saviour?" A few years ago this item appeared in a Foo-chow paper, which is Buddhism up to date, over against the claims of men like Fielding, who tells us that Buddhism has "such high morality that even Christians may go to school to Buddha:" "On the eighth day of the fourth month the Buddhist priests in the vicinity of the west gate in Dung Keng met in their yearly conclave,

one purpose being to ordain Buddhist priests, by the rite of burning marks upon their heads. Among the priests was one from Gua Sang village. This man was accused of stealing a priestly garment worth two dollars. The theft was committed last year. He was seized by the assembled priests, and before the crowd his eyes were gouged out. They then placed piles of wood about him and burned him to death." That is Buddhism in China yesterday. Some thought that Mohammedanism had changed its nature because the Turks declared a constitution, because the Persians were grasping for a parliament, because there are colleges and institutions of learning scattered over the Mohammedan world. But read the report of Armenian massacres and of medieval tortures being carried out by the very Turks who swore on the constitution and by the Koran that they would uphold liberty, equality, fraternity. I challenge anyone who has travelled around the world to deny that in their origin, in their influence, in their character, there is a great and lasting and unchangeable gulf between the non-Christian religions and the Christian religion. They are distinct in spite of much that is un-Christian in Christendom.

In the next place, the two bodies are both in motion. There was a time when Christianity, too, was largely stagnant. There was a time when the Church of Jesus Christ did not regard her Master's last commission. There was a time when Mohammedanism could have taught us what it

was to have a great missionary movement. There was a time when Christianity might have gone to school with Buddhism to learn the real missionary spirit. But today Christianity is in motion. At last the Church of Jesus Christ has begun, not to play at missions, but to take hold of missions as a great, divine task.

> "Ye that are men now serve Him,
> Against unnumbered foes,
> Your courage rise with danger,
> And strength to strength oppose."

That is the spirit of the Church of Jesus Christ today. And just as surely as Christianity is in motion, the other religions are in motion. It is the impact of two moving bodies, or of one moving body against all the other non-Christian religions. Take Hinduism, for example. If anything is true of Hinduism it is that Hinduism was built up in watertight compartments of caste, confined itself to one great peninsula, absorbed but never went out—a great and mighty system, hoary with age and self-satisfied. Hinduism today is no longer stagnant; Hinduism today is rampant.

Vivakananda and other Swamis are going out seeking whom they may lure into the immense net of Hinduism. Hinduism is no longer esoteric, but popular and tries to be modern; it has borrowed the plumes of Christianity, and faces us as a mighty, new, reformed Hinduism. Why, you can no more recognize in the talk of these reformed Hindus the old Hindu religion than you can recognize in the broken line along the

shores of Sicily, Messina as it was before the earthquake. It is all changed.

Buddhism has always been a missionary religion. It came to Ceylon from India 250 years before Jesus Christ was born. It was a missionary religion in China before the Apostle Paul became a missionary. It had already reached Japan before Mohammed was born, and before Mohammed died Buddhism had grasped the whole of Siam. In the middle ages Turkestan and Central Asia were the battleground between Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, and the statistics of religion given today for the Russian empire show that year by year the mighty struggle between these three greatest religions of the world is still going on.

Of all the non-Christian religions, perhaps, Islam has shown most of all the power of an immense and lasting momentum. We have a missionary propagandism; we have committees and boards and treasuries; we have literature and enthusiasm; but where can you point in Christendom to a missionary spirit like that which has breathed throughout the Mohammedan world for thirteen centuries? Their Laymen's Missionary Movement does not have its tenth anniversary, but its thirteen hundredth!

> Rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief,
> Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief,

—the whole laity of the Moslem word has been missionary in Africa and Asia for all these cen-

turies, until today there are over two hundred million nominal Mohammedans. Moslems are not inactive today. They are publishing Thomas Carlyle's *The Hero as Prophet,* and selling it for two annas on the streets of Lahore. They are copying the Koran and printing it for the pagan tribes in the heart of Africa. They are winning over, against Christian missions in some parts of Africa, thousands and tens of thousands of converts. The non-Christian religions, the greatest of them, are in motion today.

Not only are the non-Christian religions in motion, but the men of the yellow robe and the men of the green turban are coming into actual contact and clash and conflict with Christian missionaries, and both of them are claiming the victory. It is a clash of arms such as the world has never heard, such as history has never seen. Missionary statesmen in Africa tell you that within two decades there will be no paganism left in Africa, but Christianity and Islam will divide between them the whole of the Dark Continent. Shall the religion of the loveless Allah, the religion of the lifeless creed, the religion of the degraded home, hold in its grasp a whole continent? The call of God's providence and the command of Christ, and the very existence of our Christianity demand immediate, world-wide missionary impact on the part of Christianity with the non-Christian religions of the world.

The effect of that impact leaves no uncertainty of the result. The Christian religion, being not of

the same nature as the other religions, need fear no conflict with the other religions of the earth. He who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," said so when Buddhism was 500 years old, when Hinduism was many centuries old and when Mohammedanism, though not yet arisen, already existed in the very germ, because the Apostle Paul, one might say, describes people who could not be better described if we wished to characterize in a sentence the Moslem world today when he said, "For many walk of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is perdition, whose god is their belly, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things"—the five points of Islam: anti-Christian, hopeless, sensual, with low ideals, and without spirituality—a religion of the earth, earthy. The conflict, the impact of Christianity upon the non-Christian world may well be measured in its impact and conflict with Mohammedanism.

What has been the result of an impact which has only taken place for a very few years through missions, and only for a very few decades through Christian government, law and commerce? In the Mohammedan world you may see first of all the effect of that tremendous impact politically. Seven-eighths of the population of the Mohammedan world under the flags of Christian governments. Ninety-one million Mohammedans under the Union Jack, which bears the symbol of the Crucified. As a Mohammedan told me at Bagdad,

when I said, "Why do you spit when you see that flag?"—"It is not England that I hate; but why should England put the symbol of the Cross on her flag and over our country?" Yes, why should England put the symbol of the Cross on her flag, except that she owes her strength, and owes her glory, and owes her life, and owes her enterprise to that same Cross of Jesus Christ, towering o'er the wrecks of time.

The impact of Christianity has not only been political, but social. The former may not have been an impact always for good, although it has thrown open the doors to Christian missions. But the impact of Christianity has been social. The great social reforms now going on in the Mohammedan world are indicative that Christianity and Christian missions have not been without influence in Moslem lands. When the women of Russia present a petition to the Duma to be delivered from the oppression of their husbands, such a petition is the direct result of the impact of Christian thought. When the new constitution is proclaimed in Turkey, and there is a new era of liberty, it is the result of Robert College, Beirut College, and Assiut College, and the impact of Christian education throughout the Mohammedan world. Socially the Mohammedan world is no longer stolid and stagnant, but receptive, and looking all around the horizon to see how they can appropriate our social system without giving up their book and their prophet. But they can no more easily appropriate our social system, which

is full of the life of Christ, without giving up their book and their prophet than pick out the nummulite fossils from the limestone cliffs in the Mukattam hills. They are embedded. They stand or fall together. That is why Jesus Christ is spoken of by John, the beloved disciple, as coming not to bring peace, but the sword. That is why John says, "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." In so far as the non-Christian religions have in them the evidence of God's spirit, in so far as the non-Christian religions have shared in the ethics of Christianity, like Confucianism in its honor to father and mother, in so far they will stand the test; but in so far as the non-Christian religions are without Christ and without hope and without God, the habitations of cruelty; in so far as those who hold them, as Ian Keith Falconer said, "suffer the *horrors* of heathenism and Islam;" in so far Jesus Christ has come to destroy the works of the devil.

The Christian impact has also been an impact moral and spiritual. We are sometimes told that the work among Mohammedans is without success; that there have been no Mohammedans converted by the power of Christian missions. But we may remember that the first conversion from Islam to Christ took place even before Mohammed died. One of Mohammed's own companions left Arabia and went to Abyssinia, and there the impact of a living Christianity, although partly dead, the impact of Abyssinian Christianity opened the

eyes of that Arab, Obeid Allah bin Jahsh, and he wrote back to Mohammed, as the Arabs themselves relate, "I now see clearly, and you are still blinking." Would that Mohammed himself had received that message from the impact of one of his disciples with a living soul in Christian Abyssinia! That first convert has been added to throughout the centuries until today you can count in Persia, and Arabia, and Turkestan, yes, and Bokhara and Afghanistan, men, if not by the score, yet by the ones and twos and tens, who have laid down their lives rather than deny the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In India there are thousands of converts and two hundred preachers of the Gospel who were formerly Mohammedans. In Java there are no less than forty thousand living converts from Islam gathered into churches, and many of these churches are self-supporting. If after only half a century of such missionary effort as we have given to the Mohammedan problem, God has given us such evident victories, what will not be the victory of the impact when Christianity, a living Christianity, comes face to face with the whole Mohammedan problem in Africa and in Asia? The strength of that impact is not measured by our gifts to missions, by the endowments of our institutions or the numbers who attend our colleges. The strength of that impact is not measured by the printed page scattered over the Mohammedan world. The strength of that impact rests solely and wholly in the strength of Calvary. The Mohammedan religion and other religions

may have many great truths, but the missing link in the Moslem's creed, and all creeds of the non-Christian world, is the Cross of Jesus Christ. The Buddhist religion may elevate, almost deify, law and order, but the Buddhist faith knows nothing of the gospel of the Crucified. Hinduism knows of a million incarnations, but is ignorant of the one great Incarnation at Bethlehem.

The Cross of Calvary, because it reconciles the three greatest things in the world—the greatest thing in God, which is love; the greatest thing in the world, the moral law; and the greatest mystery of humanity, sin—will win against all other religions. Because Calvary unites these three, and solves the problem philosophically, not only, but practically for every one of us, so that face to face with that Cross we say, "My Lord and my God," and walk in his footsteps; so that face to face with that Cross life is no longer a mystery but a glorious transfiguration; therefore, the Cross of Jesus Christ will prevail until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

"Uplifted are the gates of brass,
The bars of iron yield,
To let the King of Glory pass,
The Cross hath won the field."

V

"I am astonished you are hastily shifting like this, deserting Him who called you by Christ's grace and going over to another gospel. It simply means that certain individuals are unsettling you; they want to distort the gospel of Christ. Now, even though it were myself or some angel from heaven, whoever preaches a gospel that contradicts the gospel I preached to you, God's curse be on him! I have said it before, and I now repeat it: whoever preaches a gospel to you that contradicts the gospel you have already received, God's curse be on him! —Gal. 1: 6-9 (Moffatt's Translation).

CHAPTER V

What Is the Apostolic Gospel?

"THE indifference of great masses of men today to dogma," writes Mr. Edwin Bevan in the *International Review* of *Missions,* "while they still reverence Christian ethical ideals, is something which confronts the friends of missions with a problematic situation." He then goes on to show, in his article entitled *The Apostolic Gospel,* that any attempt to get away from apostolic dogma and go back to Jesus simply as the revealer of moral value is an impossibility.

We must either accept the apostolic interpretation of Christianity or give up any attempt to set Jesus on an eminence above all other good men. The old cry "Back to Christ" often means "away from Paul and his teaching." The Sermon on the Mount, however, is not the earliest Christian document. If we consider the chronology of the New Testament books, it is a striking fact that the doctrinal epistles,—Galatians, Corinthians, Romans,—were written and circulated among the churches before the Good News was recorded by Mark or Luke. The first letter of Paul to the Corinthians was written 56 A. D.; the common date assigned to Matthew's Gospel is between 70 and 90 A. D.

The Christian teaching, therefore, of the apostles, and the doctrine accepted by the early Church, is to be found not only nor first in the Synoptics, but in the Epistles. They tell us of the finished work of Christ. They give him the preeminence above all; they find the center of their teaching in his death and resurrection; their glory in the Cross.

The apparent foolishness of this message did not disconcert them or lead to compromise. The Jews demanded miracles and the Greeks were mad in their search for philosophy. Paul determined to disregard the wisdom of both worlds, Jew and Gentile, and to proclaim a Christ crucified, although a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. In the great resurrection chapter he gives us the theme of his preaching as well as the hope of his salvation and ours. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." In a single sentence he confirms the historicity of the death of Jesus, asserts its fundamental character, and gives its supreme significance. All three of these are today called in question, discounted, or explained away.

In the non-Christian world *the teaching of the Cross* is still the stumbling-block and foolishness. The Moslem reads in his Koran (Surah on Women, vs. 155): "God hath stamped on them their unbelief * * * * for their saying, Verily we have killed the Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of God, *but they did not kill him and they*

did not crucify him, but a similtude was made for them." In this respect the Moslem teaching is perhaps borrowed from that of the early Gnostics. In various forms the idea that Christ did not really die, but swooned and came to life again without tasting death, has been taken up even in modern days. The infamous novel by George Moore entitled *The Brook Kerith* is based on the same illusions.

And where men admit the fact of Christ's death on the cross they still stumble because of its *implications*. Are not Christian Science and New Thought and other modern cults saying today, "Any God except one who died on the Cross?" Yet it was the Lamb slain, who is the object of all heaven's worship, in John's Revelation. *The Sunday School Times* recently published a cartoon representing civilization as a gentleman of culture seated in his home with the morning newspaper open before him. His wife, represented as Christianity, was about to hang on the wall of their home a picture of the Crucified, with the inscription "Redemption Through Christ's Atoning Blood." Civilization, however, remarks: "Now that we have decided to be one, you will oblige me by removing *that* from the wall of our home." But a Christianity without Christ crucified as its central doctrine and supreme hope is a contradiction of terms. We know that Jesus Christ died and why He died from the Scriptures.

The witness of pagan writers, entirely apart from the New Testament record, has been gath-

ered by Samuel Stokes, a missionary in India. He gives quotations from Tacitus, the historian Pliny, the Roman governor Suetonius, and others, who record as a matter of well-known history that Jesus of Nazareth was put to death by Pontius Pilate and crucified as a criminal. The famous passage in Josephus' *Antiquities,* Chapter XVIII, Part 3, was once called in question as not being authentic. Its genuineness has now been admitted by Harnack and others. It also gives independent witness, therefore, to the death of Jesus. In the Jewish Encyclopedia, article on Jesus Christ, it is said: "He was executed on the eve of the Passover Festival." The death of Jesus was foretold in Old Testament prophecy, and when Paul says, "He died according to the Scriptures," he doubtless referred to all the passages in the Old Testament of the suffering Messiah, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. Not only in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in the twenty-second Psalm, and in the thirteenth chapter of Zechariah do we have this picture, but perhaps Paul was not unmindful of the great unconscious prophecy of the heathen world by Plato, 429 B. C., in his *Politia,* Vol. IV, p. 74. He describes the perfect, righteous man who is to be the world's deliverer, in these terms: "Who without doing any wrong may assume the appearance of the grossest injustice; yea, who shall be scourged, fettered, tortured, deprived of his eyes, and after having endured all possible suf-

ferings, fastened to a post must restore again the beginning and prototype of righteousness."

In addition to this testimony of the Scriptures we have the witness of the Lord's Supper, an outward and visible sign of something that occurred in the breaking of His body and the pouring out of His blood. The evidence of such an unbroken tradition coming down the centuries in every branch of the Christian church cannot be gainsaid.

Moreover, the mere sign of the cross is a remarkable testimony to the historicity of the crucifixion. Once it was a symbol of shame and degradation; only the criminal and the outcast were associated with it; the curse of God and of man rested on it. This sign of the cross has now become the symbol of honor and glory, of pride and prestige. We see it on national flags, in crosses of honor, in decorations of valor, and the ministry of friendship and relief is carried on under the banner of the Red Cross.

All this is inexplicable unless the cross has been dignified, transfigured, glorified by Him who hung upon it for our sin. The historicity of the death of Jesus is established by all these proofs. He died according to the Scriptures, except for those who still dare to put the testimony of one obscure Koran verse against all the historic evidence of Jew and Christian and pagan writings.

In stating the content of the Apostolic Gospel, Paul says that *the death of Christ holds the fundamental place in Christian teaching.* "I delivered unto you first of all"—the Greek word signi-

fies *before everything else,* or as belonging to the weightiest articles of the faith. In the Septuagint the same phrase is used in Gen. 33: 2, where Jacob places the two maid-servants and their children in the very front of his cavalcade to meet Esau. And again the same Greek words are used regarding David (2 Sam. 5: 8), where he says: "Whosover smiteth the Jebusites first." Paul evidently means to say that the death of Christ for our sins is of the first importance. It is the cornerstone and keystone of Paul's Christianity. In Weymouth's Version the passage is rendered, "For I repeat to you the all-important fact which also I have been taught, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures."

The importance of the death of Jesus Christ as the fundamental fact in the New Testament is shown by the place it occupies. One-third of the New Testament matter deals with the story of the cross and the atonement. Matthew devotes two long chapters to the trial and death of Jesus; in Mark the two longest chapters relate to this event; one-seventh of the entire text of Luke is taken up with the same story, and in John's Gospel the shadow of the cross falls on the scene almost at the outset, while one-half of the narrative deals with the last week of Jesus' life.

In the Apostles' preaching as recorded in the Acts and the Epistles their one theme seems to have been Christ crucified. Peter (Acts 10: 38-43) voices the message than which they had no other, the Good News of peace through Jesus

Christ which spread throughout the length and breadth of Judea and was carried all over the Roman Empire:

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, so that he went about everywhere doing acts of kindness, and curing all who were being continually oppressed by the devil—for God was with Jesus. And we are witnesses as to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. But they even put him to death by crucifixion. That same Jesus God raised to life on the third day, and permitted him to appear unmistakably, not to al the people, but to witnesses—men previously chosen by God—namely, to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he has commanded us to preach to the people and solemnly declare that this is he who has been appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, and testify that through his name all who believe in him receive the forgiveness of their sins."

Paul at Corinth determined to know nothing in his preaching save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The very word "cross" was used so frequently that it became the synonym for "Christianity." The preaching of the cross, the offence of the cross, the glory of the cross, the power of the cross,—all these phrases indicate the place this doctrine had in Apostolic preaching. The two Christian sacraments are without significance, without symbolism, without mystic meaning, except they refer to the death of Christ. We are buried with Him in baptism; we partake of his broken body and shed blood; it is the washing of regeneration that refers to the washing away of our sins. We are to testify to the fact and the significance of the Lord's death till He come.

In other words, the most solemn office and the deepest mystery of the Christian Church gather around the cross, and the Crucified. The same witness is borne by the hymnody of the Church Catholic throughout the ages. The death of Christ has been the theme of Christian song during the persecutions of the early Church when they sang praises to their dying Lord in the catacombs, until the day of the modern revival and the Salvation Army. Take away the death of Christ and the best hymns of the Christian Church are without significance. It was with deep insight that Sir John Bowring, British consul general at Canton, China, wrote in 1823:

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

The Church of the Redeemed when they sing the new song, still celebrate the old, old story.

"And I looked, and heard what seemed to be the voices of countless angels on every side of the throne, and of the living creatures and the Elders. Their number was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, and in loud voices they were singing. It is fitting that the Lamb which has been offered in sacrifice should receive all power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. And as for every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and everything that was in any of these, I heard them say,

"To Him who is seated on the throne,
And to the Lamb,
Be ascribed all blessing and honor
And glory and might
Until the Ages of the Ages!"

Take away the death of Christ from your creed and you destroy Christianity. He draws all men unto himself because He was lifted up on the cross. Deny the significance of the crucifixion and the whole New Testament becomes a scrap of paper, for it is no New Testament, no new covenant *except in his blood.* Without that blood there is no hope for the sinner and no joy for the believer.

Paul therefore points out, in the third place, *the supreme significance of the death of Christ.* He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. There is no other way to explain the death of Christ than from the Scriptures. It is inexplicable that God did *not* deliver Him from such death, that He did *not* make his escape, as Moslems aver, unless there was a necessity and high moral purpose, a divine purpose, in his death. When Paul said that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures he referred to the Old Testament, its types and symbols, its promises and prophecies, its portraiture of the suffering Messiah, without the shedding of whose blood there could be no remission of sins. Whatever Paul's interpretation is of the doctrine of the atonement, he himself claims that it is based on the Scriptures,—that which he had received he delivered. Pauline Christianity is rooted in the Old Testament. His Good News was the fulfillment of the promise made unto the fathers.

It is impossible to eliminate certain phrases from the Synoptic Gospels which are just as clear

in their teaching regarding the significance of the death of Christ as is John's Gospel and the statements of the apostle in his epistles. For example, what can be the significance of "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matth. 20:28), unless it be to the sacrificial death of Christ as the ransom for sin? The apostolic interpretation of the death of Jesus as necessary, vicarious, and propitiatory was recorded chronologically long before the record of the Gospel. This interpretation therefore of the death of Jesus is not a later addition, but is the earliest interpretation we have.

In A. D. 53, that is, twenty years after the crucifixion, Paul writes:

"For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. 5: 6-10).

To the Corinthian church he writes:

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, therefore all died;"

And again,

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself * * * him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews clearly teaches that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross does away with sin, that He is our only high priest, that his blood has cleansing power, and that the new covenant owes its validity solely to the death of Christ. The Mosaic sacrifices were of small value—what they typified Christ fulfilled. Peter in his first epistle has the same Gospel. He speaks of Jesus who himself carried in his own body the burden of our sins to the cross so that we, having died so far as our sins are concerned, may live righteous lives. By his wounds ours have been healed. He also has no other Gospel than the Gospel of the death of Christ for our sins according to the Scriptures.

John writes concerning Christ that "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world;" "He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;" "God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The first name given to Jesus in the Gospel of John is "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," and in the last chapter of the New Testament eternal life is found only for those whose names are written in the Lamb's book, and who drink of the river of the water of life which proceedeth from the throne of the Lamb. The word "Lamb" in the Gospels has no significance and no power over human hearts unless it refers to the sacrificial Lamb of the Old Testament and the shedding of blood

for the removal of guilt and transgression. This is the Good News, the only Good News, for sinners.

"What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Oh, precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know;
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

So important, so supreme, is the place of the atonement in the apostles' thought and preaching that it seems incredible for anyone to accept the New Testament and then reject the very kernel of its teaching. "It will be admitted by most Christians," says Dr. Denney in his book entitled *The Atonement and the Modern Mind,* that if the atonement, quite apart from precise definition of it, is anything to the mind, it is everything. It is the most profound of all truths and most creative. It determines more than anything else our conception of God, of man, of history and even of nature; it determines them, for we must bring them all in some way into accord with it. It is the inspiration of all thought, the key, in the last resort, to all suffering. * * * The atonement is a reality of such a sort that it can make no compromise. The man who fights it knows that he is fighting for his life and puts all his strength into the battle. To surrender is literally to give himself up, to cease to be the man he is and become another man. For the modern mind, therefore, as

for the ancient, the attraction and the repulsion of Christianity are concentrated on the same point; the Cross of Christ is man's only glory or it is his final stumbling-block."

The story is told of Mr. Moody that when he was visiting in Europe a young minister came to him and said: "Moody, what makes the difference between your success in preaching and mine? Either you are right and I am wrong, or I am right and you are wrong."

Said Moody, "I don't know what the difference is, for you have heard me and I have never heard you preach. What is the difference?"

And the other answered: "You make a good deal out of the death of Christ, and I don't make anything out of it. I don't think it has anything to do with it. I preach life."

Said Mr. Moody, "What do you do with this: 'He hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree'?"

Said he, "I never preached that."

Said Mr. Moody, "What do you do with this: 'He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed'?"

Said he, "I never preached that."

"Well," said Mr. Moody again, "what do you do with this, 'Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission'?"

Said he, "I never preached that."

Mr. Moody then asked him, "What do you preach?"

"Well," said he, "I preach a moral essay."

Said Mr. Moody, "My friend, if you take the blood out of the Bible, it is all a myth to me."

Said he, "I think the whole thing is a sham."

"Then," said Moody, "I advise you to get out of the ministry very quickly; I would not preach a sham. If the Bible is untrue, let us stop preaching, and come out at once like men and fight against it if it is a sham and untrue; but if these things are true, and Jesus Christ left heaven and came into this world to shed his blood and save sinners, then let us lay hold of it and preach it, in season and out of season."

The apostolic Gospel to Paul and his successors, and to every evangelist and every missionary, is a personal message and a personal Gospel in the deepest sense. Paul spoke of it as *my* Gospel. *"I* received it," *"I* delivered it," he wrote. Those who have not received it in their own hearts as the final message and the saving message of God's grace can never deliver it to others.

In the life of Dr. Chatterjee, *A Prince of the Church in India,* by Dr. Ewing, the story of this Bengal Brahmin's conversion suggests much anxious thinking for those modern missionaries who attempt to relegate the cross and the atonement to a subordinate place. Dr. Chatterjee explains what was the compelling force which induced him to leave home and country and honor by accepting Christian baptism. He admits the attraction of Christ's blameless life and his perfect teaching, but, says he, "the doctrine which

decided me to embrace the Christian religion, and make a public confession of my faith, was the doctrine of the vicarious death and suffering of Christ. I felt myself a sinner, and found in Christ one who had died for my sins, paid the penalty due my sins." "For by grace are ye saved by faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

He goes on to say that after all his years of experience as a leader of the Indian church the atonement has become "in my thinking and in my life the great and sole differentiating line between Christianity and all other religions, so that when I became a Christian I felt, and feel it most strongly now, that a God all mercy is a God unjust. * * * This continues to be my creed to this day."

The true apostolic succession is not a matter of method or of ordination or of ecclesiastical connection, but of the character of our message. Have we received first of all, and delivered first of all, the news of Christ's death for sin? Do we interpret that death not in terms of human philosophy, but in terms of the Old Testament Scriptures? Does the death of Christ hold the foremost place in our preaching, in our thinking, and in our missionary program?

VI

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he had to leave for Jerusalem and endure great suffering at the hands of the elders and high priests and scribes, and be killed and raised on the third day. Peter took him and began to reprove him for it; 'God forbid, Lord,' he said, 'This must not be.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, you satan! You are a hindrance to me! Your outlook is not God's, but man's."—Matt. 16: 21-23 (Moffatt's Translation).

CHAPTER VI

The Stumbling-Block of the Cross*

IT was the deliberate judgment of Dr. James Denny when he wrote on the place and interpretation in the New Testament of the *Death of Christ,* some years ago, that the atonement did not have the place assigned to it, either in modern preaching or in theology, which it has in the New Testament, and that the proportion given to it in average current Christianity was not that of the apostles in their preaching. Those who have carefully read his book must admit that the importance of the death of Christ to Christian theology and life cannot be exaggerated. Throughout the entire New Testament the Cross dominates everything . It interprets everything, and it puts all things in their true relations to each other. The death of Christ is the central truth in the New Testament, and therefore, as Denny remarks, "both for the propagation and for the scientific construction of the Christian religion, the death of Christ is of supreme importance." How is this fact related to the Moslem problem? Is the death of Christ and his atoning work our supreme message? Ought it to be our first message?

The fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity is the absence in the former of the

* Cf. Gal. 5: 11, and 1 Cor. 1: 23 R. V.

doctrine of the Cross. The Cross of Christ is the missing link in the Moslem's creed, and not only in the Koran and in the early traditions, but in the practical experience of every missionary, especially in lands that are wholly Moslem, nothing seems to stand out more prominently than Islam's hatred of the Cross. The Koran gives Jesus Christ a high place among the prophets, and confers on Him names and titles which, if rightly interpreted, would place Him above them all, and yet it does so only by denying his death and his atonement. Modern Islam differs in no respect from orthodox Islam in this particular, and although the followers of the new Islam may speak in the highest terms of Jesus Christ as regards his character, his miracles and his influence on history, they occupy the orthodox position in this respect; nor do they find a place in their doctrine of salvation for Christ's atonement. A recent writer, and a missionary of long experience in Persia, goes so far as to say that there is "not a single important fact in the life, person and work of our Savior which is not ignored, perverted, or denied by Islam." Their chief denial, however, is of his death. There are three passages in the Koran which seem to indicate that Christ **did** die:

"But they (the Jews) were crafty, and God was crafty, for God is the best of crafty ones! When God said, 'O Jesus! I will make thee die and take thee up again to me, and will clear thee of those who misbelieve, and will make those who follow thee above those who misbelieve, at the day of judgment, then to me is your return. I will decide between you concerning that wherein ye disagree.

And as for those who misbelieve, I will punish them with grievous punishment in this world and the next, and they shall have none to help them.' But as for those who believe and do what is right, He will pay them their reward, for God loves not the unjust " (Surah 3: 47-50).

"And peace upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised up alive" (Surah 19:34).

"And I was a witness against them so long as I was amongst them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the Watcher over them, for Thou art witness over all" (Surah 5: 117).

These texts certainly seem to teach that Jesus died.

Yet, in spite of them, Moslems everywhere quote the other verse when they deal with Christians, whom they accuse of misbelief:

"And for their misbelief, and for their saying about Mary a mighty calumny, and for their saying, 'Verily, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of God' * * * BUT THEY DID NOT KILL HIM AND THEY DID NOT CRUCIFY HIM, BUT A SIMILITUDE WAS MADE FOR THEM. And verily, those who differ about him are in doubt concerning him; they have no knowledge concerning him, but only follow an opinion. They did not kill him, for sure! Nay, God raised him up unto Himself." (Surah 4: 155, 156).

In the traditions which have come down to us from the prophet himself (or which have been invented by his followers and attributed to Mohammed)* this denial of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is elaborated. As apparently the death of Jesus Christ was both affirmed and denied in the Koran, to unify its teaching the only possible way of escape was to affirm that although He died

* Goldziher, "Mohammedanische Studiën." Vol. II.

for a few hours or days, *He was not crucified.* We read in Moslem tradition:†

"And they spat upon Him and put thorns upon Him; and they erected the wood to crucify Him upon it. And when they came to crucify Him upon the tree, the earth was darkened, and God sent angels, and they descended between them and between Jesus; and God cast the likeness of Jesus upon him who had betrayed Him, and whose name was Judas. And they crucified him in His stead, and they thought that they crucified Jesus. Then God made Jesus to die for three hours, and then raised Him up to heaven; and this is the meaning of the Koran verse: 'Verily, I will cause Thee to die, and raise Thee unto Me, and purify Thee above those who misbelieve.'"

In addition to this, Moslem commentators teach that when Christ comes again the second time, He will die, emphasizing, as it were, the frailty of his human nature, which even after his return from glory, and his death for a few hours before his ascension, is still subject to death, in this also flatly contradicting all the teaching of the New Testament that "He died for sin once, and death hath no more dominion over Him."

Not only do Moslems deny the historical fact of the crucifixion, but from the days of Mohammed himself until now, they have shown a strange and strong antipathy, and even a repugnance, to the very sign of the Cross. It is related by Al Waqidi that Mohammed had such repugnance to the very form of the cross that he broke everything brought into his house with that figure upon it. This may have been mere superstition, or, as

† For these traditions and their sources, cf. Zwemer's "The Moslem Christ," pp. 78-112.

Muir remarks, "It may, on the other hand, have been symbolical of his extreme aversion to the doctrine of the crucifixion."‡

According to Abu Hurairah, the prophet said: "I swear by heaven it is near when Jesus, the Son of Mary, will descend from heaven upon you people, a just King, and He will break the cross and kill the swine." In certain books of Moslem law it is expressly laid down under the head of theft, that if a cross or crucifix is stolen from a church, the usual punishment for theft is not incurred; although if it be stolen from a private dwelling, it is a theft. It is well known to readers of the daily press that Turkey and Egypt have never been willing to have Red Cross Societies under the International Hague Convention regulations, but have organized Red Crescent Societies instead. A more recent incident illustrating Moslem hatred for the cross comes to us from the Sudan in connection with the postal service. The *United Empire* says:

"In the early days, the stamps of the Sudan bore a water-mark which for many months passed unnoticed by their users. But one day a Mohammedan, in an idle moment, held one of them up to the light, and discovered to his dismay that this water-mark bore an obvious resemblance to a Maltese cross. Now, to a devout Moslem, any suspicion of veneration to the cross of the Christian is not only distasteful; it is absolutely forbidden. And here for months the Moslem scribes of the Sudan had been placing their lips, or at least their tongues, to its hidden design unknowingly. It may seem a small thing to some people, but the world knows what a doleful page of history has been written merely because some cartridges were

‡ Muir's "Mohammed." Vol. III, p. 61.

greased; and in the Sudan the authorities acted with discretion. They changed the water-mark. Thus to philatelists a Sudan stamp water-marked with a design bearing a resemblance to a Maltese cross, is a rather valuable discovery."

It is true that educated Moslems are becoming ashamed of this repugnance to the symbol of the Cross, and try to explain away certain of the early traditions or present-day practices. In a supposed interview with a newspaper correspondent Sheikh Rashid Ridha, of Cairo, utterly denies the story related by Charles Doughty regarding Arab boys who are taught to defile the Cross, drawn in the desert sand.* But the story is true. No man has so closely examined and so carefully reported popular Islam as it exists in Arabia today as this prince among explorers. Here are his words:

"In the evening I had wandered to an oasis side; there a flock of the village children soon assembling with swords and bats, followed my heels, hooting, 'O Nasrany! O Nasrany!' and braving about the kaffir and cutting crosses in the sand before me, they spitefully defiled them, shouting a villanous carol * * * This behavior in the children was some sign of the elders' meaning from whom doubtless they had heard their villainous rhyming."

The Armenian massacres afforded other terrible instances of this fanatic hatred of the Cross, the details of which can never be published. It is true, on the other hand, as Mr. Leeder states, that in the Sahara and Tunisia the Cross is used as a tattoo mark and in the decoration of weapons, etc.

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* See S. H. Leeder, "Veiled Mysteries of Egyt," pp. 323, 324.

This use of the Cross, however, in certain parts of the Moslem world is due either to the fact that it has continued in use by tribes which were once Christian, or that the symbol is of sinister import. The Tuaregs of the Sahara, as well as the Kabyles of North Africa, were undoubtedly once Christian.* And as regards the latter explanation, abundant proof exists in such works as those of El Buni on magic, talismans and amulets. Near the Bab Al Fatooh in Cairo, Moslem women today buy silver amulets specially made for them, consisting of a rude image of the Christ on the Cross, and on the back are verses from the Koran! It is well-known that these are worn not to honor the Christ or the Cross, but with the intention of driving out demons by the use of a sign which is itself considered demonic!

Not only is the symbol of the cross a stumbling-block to the Moslem mind, but the doctrine of the cross is an offence. A number of books and pamphlets that have recently appeared show this antipathy. Halil Halid in his book, "The Crescent versus the Cross," shows how far even the educated Moslem carries this opposition. He is an honorary M. A. of Cambridge and a licentiate of the Institute of Law in Constantinople, and writes:

"Islam also holds different views on the death of Christ. Whether historically correct or not, it does not admit the possibility of the crucifixion of Christ. It advances the theory that someone else must have been crucified by mistake in his place, as it cannot reconcile his lofty position with the alleged form of his death, a form

* Hans Visscher, "Across the Sahara," p. 168.

which, to the Moslem mind, only befits criminals. To the Moslem mind it is not only sacrilegious, but also illogical at once to deify Him and make Him suffer such a death. The Christian explanation that 'Christ suffered that painful death for our sins' fails to satisfy the critics of the non-Christian world. It is doubtless convenient for many Christians to regard the passages of their Scriptures concerning the crucifixion as an insurance policy, and to conduct themselves in a manner which is hardly pious, feeling sure that they are safe against hell-fire because Christ suffered for their sins. Mussulman critics say 'what fanciful notions these Christians entertain on this subject! They not only state that the One, whom they are to worship, died such a death, but also make a mournful picture out of their notion of crucifixion, representing it by the fine arts—a picture which is neither realistic nor aesthetic.'"

Many of the most bitter attacks on Christianity by the Moslem press in recent years have been similarly directed against the Cross and its teaching. In a book recently published at Beirut by Mohammed Tahir et Tannir, entitled *Papan Elements in the Christian Religion,* the author draws a parallel between Krishna and Christ, and even illustrates by crude wooden cuts Krishna's death and the death of Christ on the Cross, the one with a crown of glory, the other with a crown of thorns! The book tries to prove that all Christian teaching regarding the crucifixion and the atonement is not based on historical fact, but was borrowed piecemeal from heathenism. Mohammed Tawfiq Sidqi in a book just published, entitled *Din Allah,* attacks the Christian faith both as regards its documents and its dogma, using the arguments of modern destructive criticism, without being aware apparently that it is a two-edged

sword which would play havoc with the Koran and the traditions if its edge were once tried. In the introduction he states that Christ is in no sense an atonement for sin, and that ideas of sacrifice and atonement are only remnants of heathenism. He attempts to prove that none of the prophecies of the Old Testament, especially not those found in Isa. 53, Ps. 22 and Zech. 12: 13, refer in any way to Christ or his death on the cross.

It is interesting to notice, however, how more and more the advocates of Islam and the opponents of Christianity among Moslems are becoming thoroughly aware that the doctrine of the Cross is the Gibraltar of the Christian faith, the center and pivot of Christian theology, and the very foundation of the Christian hope. In the last number of a monthly review, published by Seyyid Mohammed Rashid Ridha, *Al Manar*, twelve pages are devoted to a rather candid inquiry regarding the crucifixion of Christ, and in the very introduction of his subject the learned author says that "the belief in the crucifixion is the foundation of the Christian religion; if it were not for its doctrine of the Cross and redemption, which are the root of the Christian religion, they would not spend time in calling upon men to accept and embrace it." The writer goes on to state that he has gathered the significance of this doctrine and the sum of its teaching by attendance at public meetings, and by reading the books of Christians, and he sets before his Moslem readers this summary:

"Adam, when he transgressed God Most High by eating from the forbidden tree, became a sinner and all his descendants with him, and therefore worthy of punishment in the world to come and of everlasting destruction. In consequence all his posterity were reckoned as sinners, and worthy also of punishment. And so all his posterity were guilty of Adam's sin. Now, since God Most High had the attributes of both justice and mercy, a difficulty (far be it from God Most High to be in difficulty!) occurred to Him because of Adam's transgression; namely, that if he should punish Adam for his sin, this would be opposed to his mercy, and He would not be merciful! And if He did not punish Adam, it would be opposed to his justice, and He would not be just! As if, since the disobedience of Adam, God spent his time in thinking out a plan by which He could combine his justice and his mercy! Now, He did not arrive at it until about 1912 years ago (God forbid! God forbid!), and the plan was that His Son Most High, who is God himself, should tabernacle in the womb of a woman from among the sons of Adam, and be conceived by her and born from her, and become her child; a perfect man since He was her son, and perfect God since He was the Son of God, for the Son of God, they say, is God; and He was free also from all the sin and the transgression of the sons of Adam. Then after He had lived a short time with men, eating what they ate, and drinking what they drank, and enjoying what they enjoyed, and suffering as they suffered, He was overpowered by his enemies who tried to kill Him by a shameful death, namely, the death on the cross, which is cursed in the Holy Book. And so He bore the curse and the cross for the redemption of humanity and their salvation from their sins, as John said in his first epistle: 'And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.' (Far be it from God the Lord of glory to be so described!)"

We can see from this literal translation of a brief portion of the article in question how fully Moslems today are aware that the fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity lies in the doctrine of the Cross.

Following this exposition of the teaching of Christians, the article summarizes the objections to it as follows:

1. It is opposed to reason.

2. It is opposed to theism. How can God, who is omnipresent and everlasting, degrade himself by dwelling in a virgin's womb?

3. It is opposed to God's knowledge; for the plan of salvation—if such it is—was an afterthought.

4. It is opposed to both the mercy and justice of God; to his mercy because He allowed Christ to suffer, being innocent, without delivering Him; and to his justice in allowing those who crucified Him to do it unpunished.

5. It leads to impiety, because if this is the way of salvation, then no matter how wicked a man is he finds deliverance through the cross, and will never be punished for his sins.

6. It is unnecessary. We have never heard it stated by any reasonable person, or those who are learned in law, that the attribute of justice is abrogated by the pardon of a criminal; on the contrary, it is considered a virtue to pardon an offender. Why should not God do so?

From the above it is easy to judge that the modern standpoint of Islam is not only opposed to the historical fact of the crucifixion, but to the historical interpretation of that fact in Christian theology.

The question here arises how can we account for Mohammed's repugnance to the crucifixion?

Was it that he desired to defend the reputation of Jesus, the greatest prophet before him, from the stain which he considered was cast upon it by the Jews who boasted that they had slain Him? (Surah 4: 156). It may have been that to Mohammed's mind there was something abhorrent in the idea of a prophet being left to the mercy of his foes, especially in the case of one of the greater prophets. The Koran makes much of how God wrought deliverance for Noah, Abraham, Lot and others, even by a miracle. It may have been that Mohammed, therefore, borrowing an idea of certain Christian sects, believed and taught that Christ was not crucified. The Basilidians, we are told, held that the person crucified was Simon of Cyrene; the Cyrentians and Carpocratians, that it was one of Jesus' followers, while the Persian heretic Mani taught that it was the prince of darkness himself.* Perhaps there was nothing to prevent Mohammed from adopting this view, as he was but imperfectly acquainted with the real doctrines of Christianity. We say, perhaps, because another view is put forward by Koelle in his philosophical study, on the historical position of Mohammedanism.† He writes:

"Mohammed, from his low, earthly standing-point, could neither apprehend the unique excellence of the character of Christ, nor the real nature of his all-sufficient and all-comprehending salvation.

* Cf., Rice, "Crusaders of the Twentieth Century," p. 252.

† "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," Book III, pp. 310, 334.

"Not want of opportunity, but want of sympathy and compatibility, kept him aloof from the religion of Christ. His first wife introduced him to her Christian cousin; one of his later wives had embraced Christianity in Abyssinia, and the most favored of his concubines was a Christian damsel from the Copts of Egypt. He was acquainted with ascetic monks, and had dealings with learned Bishops of the Orthodox Church."

Again, Mohammed was not ignorant of the supreme importance of the doctrine of the atonement. According to a well-known tradition, he said:

"I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form, and He said unto me, 'O Mohammed, knowest thou on what subject the highest angels contend?' I answered, 'Yes, O my Lord, on the subject of atonement, that is to say, on the services and degrees which are the cause of the atonement of sins.' Thereupon the word was addressed to me, 'What is atonement?' I answered, 'Atonement is the remaining in the house of prayer after the service has been performed; the going to the meetings on foot; and the taking an ablution when trials and troubles befall: whoever does these things will live and die well, and be as pure from sin as if he had just been born of his mother."

Other traditions relate how Mohammed explained some of the pagan sacrifices, such as *Al 'Aqiqa* and the sacrifices at Mecca, as in a certain sense atoning for sin, so the doctrine of substitution could not, in itself, have been repugnant to him (Mishkat 18: 3).

Whatever the explanation may be, the fact remains that Islam from its origin until our own day has been an enemy of the Cross of Christ, and has ever made the crucifixion a cause of stumbling. This position, once taken by orthodox

Islam, has been held throughout the centuries. The historical fact of Christ's crucifixion, with all it signifies to Christianity, has always been flatly contradicted. Only among the Shiah sect in Persia do we have a remarkable illustration of the doctrine of the atonement and of substitution forcing a way for itself into Islam. The Aryan mind was never content with the barren monotheistic idea of the Semite Arabs. In Persia, the doctrine of an incarnation, of intercessors, and of salvation by atonement, found eager acceptance at an early date. Those who have witnessed the miracle play of Hassan and Hussein, commemorative of the events at Kerbela, will realize how large a place this death occupies in their life and thought as a propitiation for sin. At the close of the miracle play, the following words are put into the mouth of Mohammed:

> "The key of paradise is in Hussein's hand. He is the mediator for all. Go thou and deliver from the flames everyone who has in his lifetime shed but a single tear for thee: everyone who has in any way helped thee; everyone who has performed a pilgrimage to thy shrine or mourned for thee. Bear each and all to paradise."*

In presenting this doctrine of the atonement, therefore, to Moslems of the Shiah sect, the story of Kerbela can be used to interpret that of Calvary, and finds a response. At the Cairo missionary conference the Rev. S. G. Wilson, of Tabriz, gave this testimony: "When we are setting forth

* Sir Lewis Pelly, "The Miracle Play of Hassan and Husain," Vol. II, pp. 343-348.

the story of the cross to Persians, they often reply, 'In like manner the blood of Imam Hussein avails for us as an offering to God.' This condition of belief prepares them to hear and understand the Christian doctrine of the atonement. It can be presented to them as to a Christian audience."

But how is it in regard to orthodox Islam? Should we emphasize this doctrine of the crucifixion where it is bitterly opposed and vigorously disputed? Would it not be the part of worldly wisdom and of missionary strategy to keep the Cross and the atonement (as well as the doctrine of the Trinity) well in the background, and present to Moslems the *life* of Christ rather than his death as the theme of our gospel? Shall we not follow the discretion (or was it the fear?) of the Sudan authorities in the matter of the postage stamps, and remove even the water-mark of the Cross from our preaching lest we offend our Moslem brethren? Let the Apostle Paul give us the answer, that apostle who taught "that no man should put a stumbling-block in his brother's way or an occasion of falling;" and who made it a principle of his life that, "if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble." His reply would be in the words he wrote to the disputers of this world: "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

Paul knew that the Cross was a stumbling-block and the doctrine of the Cross foolishness to

Jew and Gentile, and yet he deliberately, emphatically, persistently, everywhere, made his mission and his message the Cross. As we think of the millions in Moslem lands to whom our hearts go out in sympathy—their ignorance, their sinfulness, their utter need of the Saviour—those other words of the apostle find new meaning: "For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ." Let us never on that account consider them *our* enemies, but prove to them that we are their friends by showing not by our creed only, but by our lives, the power of the Cross and its glory. We must meet this earliest and latest challenge of our Moslem opponents not by compromises and concessions, nor by cowardice of silence, but by boldly proclaiming that the very heart of our religion, its center and its cynosure, its pivot and power, is the atonement wrought by Christ on the Cross. We must show them that the cross is the highest expression of the very Spirit of Christ; that, as Andrew Murray says, "the Cross is his chief characteristic; that which distinguishes Him from all in heaven and on earth; that which gives Him his glory as Mediator on the throne through eternity." If faithfully, fearlessly, sympathetically, we preach Christ Crucified, He can make the stumbling-block of the Cross a stepping-stone for the Moslems into his kingdom.

There is no other way into that Kingdom than the way of the Cross. Only by the preaching of

the Cross can we expect among Moslems conviction of sin, true repentance, and faith in the merits of Another. The Cross, and the Cross alone, can break down their pride and self-righteousness, and lay bare all hypocrisy and self-deception. More than this, the Cross will win their love if rightly preached. The Cross is the very antithesis of the spirit of Islam, because it is the spirit of Christianity. This issue must be made clear at the very outset, for it is wrapped up in every other truth of the Christian religion. Our conclusion, therefore, can find no better expression than in the words of Denny:

"We may begin as wisely as we please with those who have a prejudice against it, or whose conscience is asleep, or who have much to learn both about Christ and about themselves before they will consent to look at such a gospel, to say nothing of abandoning themselves to it; but if we do not begin with something which is essentially related to the atonement, presupposing it or presupposed by it or involved in it, something which leads inevitably, though it may be by an indirect and unsuspected route, to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, *we have not begun to preach the gospel at all.*"*

* Denny, "The Death of Christ," p. 302.

VII

"For it was by him that all things were created, both in heaven and on earth, both the seen and the unseen, including Thrones, angelic Lords, celestial Powers and Rulers; all things have been created by him and for him; he is prior to all, and all coheres in him. Also, he is the head of the Body, that is, of the Church, in virtue of his primacy as the first to be born from the dead—that gives him preëminence over all. For it was in him that the divine Fullness willed to settle without limit, and by him it willed to reconcile in his own person all on earth and in heaven alike, in a peace made by the blood of his cross."—Col. 1: 16-20 (Moffatt's Translation).

CHAPTER VII

Christianity as Final Religion

WHAT we know of Christ and Christianity is contained in the book called the New Testament. We must either accept it or reject it as the record of the historic Christ. Many passages might be quoted in which Jesus himself and his apostles claim that Christianity is absolute and that He is the only Saviour. At two of the most solemn moments in the life of our Lord his self-assertion and the utter audacity of his claims would seem to prevent his classification with men. Either He was besides himself or He was in a unique sense the Son of God. What else can we infer from the record in Matt. 11: 25-28? Who but an absolute teacher with a final message would dare to say: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Such words imply omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. In the Gospel according to John where Jesus tells Thomas (almost casually), 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no man cometh

unto the Father but by me,' we cannot escape the same inference. Paul in the first chapter of Colossians uses language which, unless we do violence to every rule of syntax and interpretation, makes Jesus of Nazareth co-equal with Jehovah. "In Him were all things created. * * * In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. * * * In all things He must have the preëminence." And in the final chapter of the New Testament Jesus is call the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Bengel points out that this is a manifest proof of the supreme glory and dignity of our Lord. "Before the first revelation of Him in the final consummation, there is no other God; all false gods have both been set up and removed in the meantime: and so before the coming of Christ in the flesh and after his coming to judgment there is no other Christ. All the Christs in between have been false Christs."

But the world demands others proofs than the statement of Revelation, however clear and conclusive to the Christian. We gladly acknowledge that there is good and truth in the non-Christian religions. This has enabled them to survive and gives them their power. Yet there is no truth or beauty in them, which cannot be found, is not found, in a purer and more perfect form in Christianity. Christ himself appeals to the results of his teaching as the proof of his mission. "By their fruits ye shall know them." In at least ten particulars Christ and Christianity stand supreme over against other leaders and their teachings.

1. Christ's Bible, that is the Old Testament, and our Bible, which includes the New Testament, clearly teach the unity and solidarity of the human race. Not only in the story of creation and in the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, but in the whole scheme of Revelation and the universality of its message, the Bible declares what Paul preached on Mars Hill: "That God made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Contrast this teaching with that of caste in Hinduism, the Buddhist doctrine of incarnations, and the hopeless division of mankind from all eternity into two classes, infidels and believers, taught by Islam. Even as there is no true conception of the Fatherhood of God outside of the Bible, so there is no true conception of the brotherhood of man.

2. Christ came to destroy race-barriers and race-hatred. He gave womanhood its place, childhood its rights, the slave his freedom, and the barbarian welcome. In the fellowship of Jesus Christ, his love, his mercy, his Kingdom, there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free, Roman nor Barbarian. Wherever the followers of Jesus Christ have disobeyed this law of his Kingdom through race-hatred and prejudice they have misrepresented that Kingdom which has no frontier, and in which the humble alone receive citizenship.

The non-Christian religions without exception condemn women by the principles of their teaching to the place of chattel or slave. Buddhism

proclaims that no woman as woman can be saved. What a contrast this is with the teaching of Jesus Christ to the outcast Samaritan at the well. Islam has degraded womanhood by the lives and the literature of its apostles, from the days of Mohammed and Ali until our own day.

Christ, the founder of Christianity, is not the son of any nation or people, but the Son of Man, the Perfect Man. Mohammed was an Arab; that is his boast, and the result has been that as long as his religion abides, it is tied hand and foot to a civilization based upon the Arabian institutions of the seventh century. To be a true Moslem one must copy the pattern once for all laid down, and it is an arabesque—without life.

> "So while the world rolls on from age to age
> And realms of thought expand;
> The letter stands without expanse or range
> Stiff as a dead man's hand."

Confucius was a Chinese scholar, Buddha an Indian ascetic, Socrates a Greek philosopher. The systems of thought and philosophy to which they gave birth are therefore indelibly national. But Jesus of Nazareth, although a Jew by lineage, was not a Jew in his limitations or ideals or teachings. He was neither an occidental nor an oriental in the popular meaning of these words. He combined in himself all the ideals of East and West, without any of their limitations. In Him we see the Alpha and Omega of ideal manhood. This thought is beautifully expressed by an Indian writer, M. C. Roy, who for more than twenty years has been a

headmaster of a mission school at Lucknow. The lines were written in reply to Kipling:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, the twain
Shall never meet!—so sings the sage his song.
One clear crescendo, as though nothing wrong.
And naught but truth was uttered in that strain!
Now, ye who rush to swell the score of such
Half-truths and hybrid thoughts, come listen ye
To one that, all unlearning, learnt to be
Responsive to the Spirit's guiding touch:
Love that loves all, and dies to love again—
The love that spans all gulfs and scales all heights,
That breaks all bars and holds in high disdain
All that parts man from man, and disunites—
This God-Man's Love that breathes sweet peace and rest,
Can blend, and blend in one, both East and West."

4. Christ's purpose and command and promise in regard to his mission are world-wide. This is a unique characteristic even of Old Testament prophecy, that it sweeps the whole horizon and includes in its plan the final enlightenment, the salvation of all nations. The sixty-seventh Psalm, and the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah are examples. In no other book of all the sacred books of the East do we find such expressions regarding the universality of God's love, and his all-embracing purpose. The great commission in its four-fold form finds no parallel even in Islam or Buddhism, although both are missionary faiths. One ceases to be a Hindu by crossing the ocean. Islam has for the most part been self-limited on account of its prayer ritual to the heat-belt; but Christianity has gone to every nation and clime on its triumphal march. Of no other religious reader have

men dared to write that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess," save as regards Jesus Christ. The watchword of the missionary enterprise, the evangelization of the world in this generation, is inconceivable when applied to any other religion; and it never has been conceived by any other enthusiast or disciple of other religions.

5. The laws and ritual of the Christian religion are so simple and universal that they are possible everywhere and for everybody. The New Testament knows of no sacred place or shrine, river or mountain. When the Samaritan woman referred to the sacred character of Mount Gerizim Jesus answered: "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. * * * God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." Whenever Christian tradition or practice has laid claim to special sanctity for any particular place, it was in direct conflict with the teaching of Christ and the world-mission of his apostles. According to Islam, prayer is impossible at all times or in all places or by everybody. A prayer at Mecca has more value, arithmetical and spiritual, than at Medina; a prayer at Medina has more value than one at Jerusalem. In Hinduism the three sacred rivers are the Indus, then the Sarasvati, and then the Ganges. There are hundreds of *tirthas*, sacred places for merit and pilgrimage. The whole prayer ritual in Buddhism and Islam is artificial and practically impossible for women and children. In Mohammedan works of theology there are whole

sections on the occasions, method, variety and effect of ablution; on the different kinds of water allowed; on the times when prayer is not permitted and on the details of posture and genuflection, which would be puerile were they not pathetic. How simple are the teachings of Christ! How universal the injunctions of his apostles—"Pray without ceasing"—"I will that men pray everywhere." Christianity enjoins no public or private duty which cannot be performed because of age, sex, clime or climate. In this respect its very sacraments are simple and appropriate, and its form of worship can be observed in catacomb or cathedral, hut or palace, in prison or in the trenches, by land or by sea, at the poles and at the tropics. Jesus Christ is the only religious leader who ever identified his mission and his message with childhood. We cannot conceive of Confucius or Buddha or Mohammed saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto me * * * of such is the kingdom of heaven."

6. The Gospel, that is the good news of the person and work and power of Jesus Christ, has been translated into all languages, and what is far more remarkable, is translatable into every human speech. Most of the sacred books of the other religions are difficult to translate and in many cases impossible of translation because of their style and contents. The former is often artificial and highly poetic, or in such literary form as to defy translation; but the Bible has proved as eloquent as it is comprehensible in all languages.

Its style is human and its form universal. Many of the Hindu books, e.g., the *Dharam Sindhu,* which describes the holy festival and the "Tantras" that deal with Sakti worship are obscene and horrible beyond belief. Who would care to give a popular, literal translation of the thirty-third or sixty-sixth chapter of the Koran?

Although other sacred books have been translated into languages not their own, they are the exception and not the rule. Most of these translations were the result of Christian scholarship, and were not spontaneous. The Bible, however, has won its readers and proved its popularity from the earliest centuries. In days when each copy had to be made by hand the scribes multiplied only such books as were in demand; yet we are told that "the plays of Aeschylus survive in about fifty manuscripts, while of the New Testament we possess over 4,000 Greek manuscripts, more or less complete, besides 8,000 Latin manuscripts, of the Vulgate version." The earliest book to be printed in Europe was the Latin Bible, and one hundred editions of it had appeared during the first half century of printing. The most popular modern English author is Charles Dickens, and it has been computed that since *Pickwick* appeared 25,000,000 copies of his books have gone out into the world. But during the last four years of war alone the Bible societies have circulated forty million portions of the Scriptures in 437 languages. The Bible is the best-selling book in the world.

7. Christ has begun to occupy the dominant place in the world of law and culture and morals. When Pilate wrote above the Cross "Jesus of Nazareth King," he unwittingly foretold that Christ should have dominion in the Latin world of law, civil and international, in the Greek world of literature and culture, and in the Hebrew world of ethics and religion. The flags of at least two of the world's greatest empires bear the sign of the Cross. The same symbol was fittingly chosen for the international and supernational ministry of aid and friendship to all who suffer the horrors of war—the Red Cross. The principles of international law are based on the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. The violations of international law, the cruel wrongs of exploitations, or the maladministration of subject colonies are condemned by the conscience of humanity because that conscience has to some degree been Christianized. Christians have often failed, and Christian nations, but Christianity and Christ never. "The war," said an Egyptian paper in 1915, "has proved not the failure of Christ or Christianity, but of Christians." The old Greek civilization, its music, sculpture, painting, architecture and literature have been literally led captive in the train of Jesus Christ. All the fine arts have become finer because of his coming into the world and his death on the Cross. All the world has gone after Him for new ideals. Whether this was done with reverence and awe or whether art stripped Jesus, as the soldiers did, of his raiment and, having re-

jected Him, cast lots over his seamless robe, does not detract from our argument. The history of music, sculpture, painting and architecture, cannot leave out the story of the Gospel and must give some answer to explain the preëminence of Jesus.

The ethics of the New Testament have become the international standard of right and wrong, the yard-stick by which men measure conduct. In no other way can we explain the fact that Hindus are today reading Christianity into Hinduism, and Moslems are rejoicing when they discover traditions (however obscure) which point to the Christlike character of their prophet. Christianity has in recent years exercised an immense influence upon Japanese life and thought, quite apart from its acknowledged doctrinal effect upon Buddhism and Shintoism in the past. The Babi-Behai faith, which claims to be the universal religion, has borrowed not only its ethical standards and doctrinal terminology, but its very claim to be universal from Christianity. All of the Neo-Mahammedan sects which denounce polgamy, concubinage, divorce and slavery as contrary to Islam do violence to the facts of history in order to raise the Arabian to the level of the Nazarene.

In the Koran and in orthodox Moslem tradition, Christ is the *only* sinless prophet, untouched by Satan at birth, victorious over all temptation, and who returns at last from heaven to establish righteousness.

8. Christ's idea of God, nay, his revelation of God is the highest and most comprehensive conception of Deity that the human mind has ever expressed or imagined. A God who is at once transcendent in his unapproachable majesty, God the Father of all, above all, full of glory, whom no man can see; immanent in creation and through his Spirit in human hearts; incarnate in "the Son of his love in whom we have redemption through his blood." "The God whom men know outside of Jesus Christ," says Alexander Maclaren, "is a poor nebulous thing; an idea and not a reality." No one would ever think of consulting Confucius, the sage of China, on the subject of God. On other matters his teaching is often very illuminating and helpful, but on this subject he practically taught nothing. "Where in all China," writes Charles L. Ogilvie of Peking, "can one find anything that corresponds to what the ten-year-old Christian child knows about God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Would anyone who knows this God be attracted by the hundred and one imaginary Buddhas, the innumerable Pu'sas, with the merciful Kwam Kin at the head, the Gemmy Emperor, who rules on Tai-shan; Kwan Ti, the god of war, or Allah, whose compassion is imprisoned by fate? He who was called the "brightness of the Father's glory and the express-image of His person" has so flooded the world with light that no one who has seen the face of the heavenly Father is at all drawn to the gods of the nations." Islam has risen higher than any of the other non-

Christian faiths in its conception of God, and yet in four particulars has as conspicuously failed to reach the New Testament or even the Old Testament idea. (a) There is no Fatherhood. (b) There is an absence of all emphasis on the supreme attribute of love with all its great implications. (c) Allah is not absolutely, unchangeably and eternally just. It is possible, as some allege, that the western church may have emphasized the forensic aspect of God's holiness and righteousness unduly. But the Bible and the human conscience in all ages also emphasize this truth. It is found in Greek theism. The Judge of all the earth must do right. Allah, however, makes it easy for men; neither in his holiness nor in his mercy is his righteousness manifested. (d) Add to this that there is, as Raymond Lull pointed out, a lack of harmony in Allah's attributes. Without an atonement, how could there be real harmony?

Christ is the final revelation of God as regards his being and his attributes. "He that hath seen me," He said, "hath seen the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son hath declared Him."

9. Christ combines in Himself the highest ideal of character and of redemption. All religions have ideals of character and ways of salvation. They all start from the same point in response to the hunger of the human heart for rest and forgiveness, and in search for higher life. But they all fail to reach the goal.

"Not all the blood of beasts on [their] altars slain can give the guilty conscience peace or wash away the stain." Aside from every theory of the atonement the fact remains that Christ satisfies the human heart as a sufficient Saviour. Tens of thousands of every nation and tribe and kindred testify.

> "Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
> More than all in Thee I find."

Only of this Man was it said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The character of Jesus is incomparable. He is the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy. "By the confession of friend and foe alike," says Bosworth Smith, the apologist for Mohammed, "the character of Jesus of Nazareth stands alone in its spotless purity and its unapproachable majesty." The non-Christian religions one and all present no perfect moral ideal. Not one of the founders of ethnic religions ever used words like Christ did: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" None of them claimed to be morally the ideal and goal of humanity. Jesus *said* He was 'the Way, the Truth and the Life,' and *proved* it.

10. He proves it today. He offers the strongest possible evidence for the truth of his teaching, namely, experience. Christianity is not primarily a religion based on human or divine authority, although it has the authority of Divine revelation through human channels and of Him who claimed

to be the Son of God. Nor does Christianity base its claims on tradition—though unbroken tradition —as does Islam or later Judaism. Nor does Christ, although He worked miracles, appeal to might as an argument for the truth of his teaching. Christianity was not propagated by force or by the sword. Those that seized it were ignorant of or blind to the spirit of their Master. Nor did Christ depend on the logic of argument to convince men, although He spoke as never man spake. He appealed to the freedom of the human will by inviting men to try the experiment of his friendship and fellowship: "Follow me," "Come unto me," "Ask and ye shall receive," "If any man will do His will he shall know," "Ye will not come unto me," "Will ye also go away," and "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The experiment to which Christ here challenges the human heart has been tried for twenty centuries by hundreds of millions and never yet failed. Those who draw near to Christ, enter his friendship, look up into his face and clasp his pierced hand, always experience two things. First, a sense of spiritual and moral bankruptcy, and then a sense of spiritual and moral asset and affluence. The character and the demands of Jesus produce the first; His Cross and Resurrection the second. Paul the self-righteous becomes the "chief of sinners"; Paul the dauntless can do all things through Christ, possesses all things in Christ and inherits all because of Christ. And Paul's experience was not unique. It has been repeated in the labora-

tory of the hearts of all "twice-born men" down the ages. Those who have had this experience have no further doubt that Christ is the only Saviour, and Christianity the final religion. For them the two eternities, past and future, and the whole period lying in between are united and controlled by one purpose, redemption through Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega. In all things He has the preëminence. He will yet reconcile all things unto himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens. He will restore the lost harmony of the universe, because to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. As Pascal declares in his *Thoughts on Religion,* "Jesus Christ is the center of everything and the object of everything, and he who does not know Him knows nothing of the order of the world and nothing of himself. In Him is all our felicity and virtue, our life, our light, our hope; apart from Him there is nothing but vice, misery, darkness, despair, and we see only obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in our own."

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